

his it happened or didn't
t and general warrior philos is perverse game too

they go on instincts a lot

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July 27, 1953 Treaty at Panmunjohn, Korea

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In darkening bronze three men sit at a white table. Above a pale umbrella floats. In the middle of the table... what seems to be an antique-gold pyramid. The three, outlined in bronze grains of trembling light, are laughing in a jazzy, syncopated way. What happens to laughter at such a time when purple insinuates sooty golds and deer watch from the mouth of a black wood?

Yeah. Right. Korea. Land of the Morning Calm. And afternoon. Evening too yeah! At least after the war when alls you could do is sit around and fart for entertainment. Not like my first

tour there when we got our assholes reamed from the Yalu River to sweet-smelling Pusan. But I was infantry then, gentlemen, a soldier! Not yet among you 4F commandos of the ordinance Corps, fucking up all manner of weapons and jeeps and tanks.

That happened in Vietnam. where they sent a killer to repair binoculars!

ITWhat a waste!

The speaker adds a beercan to the flickering pyramid of beercans in the center of the white table.

Well hell now! You two old sergeants liked the shitsmell of Pusan. Reminded you of your Rebel homes.

The two other men chuckle, make waving toasts in the deepening twilight,

these gestures telling him to go on.

They use shit for fertilizer there, as you two grizzlies know!

Got stuck out one night on maneuvers. , carved out a squash and slept in it.

So is bad! No .tber drunk is saying anything. HCy . Got stuck out onedning to a story tha deadly fuckin serious. But dot

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sweat it cause it never happened. Well it did but it didn't.

Alls you have to know in this world is what didn't happen.

And old sergeants know things that never happened better than anybody.

Anyways what did happen, believe it our not, is that the war ended just about when I eased into my second tour there. why they sent me: End the war Yes Sir Right away Sir

Well yore wrong cause ding to a story that you and me and all the

other sergeants run the fuckin army which is conveniently forgotten in Hell

peace time. /in wartime too. oh what am I talking about?

Preaching to the converted. Christ Almighty worse than a crying drunk or something. Let me fish another brew out here.

He pushes aside a hunk of black, bobbing ice to get a dripping can. Pops the tab and the tiny spray picks up flecks of purple light.

The wabrella, W seen, hangs above.so we all know is true, goddamn straight true: The old sergeants basic Basial

You know something? Besides this being a mighty small pyramid for

a trio of professional drinkers like us? You know, kids said I

could never ask the basic questions. most lately about Vietnam naturally. Nam! Her43!the most tucked up war in this nations lifetime.

Besides ruining the country and all that shit it ruined my life too.

M it, eq -

Busted up my marriage, lost me a son up in Canada Can you imagine? Fuckin Canada? You dot have to tell me about family. You dot have to tell me about country.

The other son he went to Nam and now he hates me for it, like I engineered the whole war or something. Ain't that some shit?

They spit on him when he got back. In San Francisco airport they spit on him. Welcome to the world of soldiering. My country right or wrong! And who gives a shit?

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That therthe mos for al time. And the answer is I do. The Sergeant. And all that shit pouring out of the TV about Vietnam And never the soldiers' side,the troopers'! The kid soldier maybe, crybaby, but never the troopers'. He takes what's given. Drop him down anywhere and gets it fuckin done Is only politics takes time. Fuckin Vietnam! What happened to us? The professionals lost! Our trade and we lost at it.

Yeah yeah yeah so e you and me and all sergeants again what you know, but you gotta be reminded. Maybe that last remindinglll pull the barrel out of your mouth.

Right or put it in there. Take your choice.

Fuck it Open up your eyes and look at those deer out there. Ever see anything that fuckin beautiful? Her for algood company pd this beautiful light. Right at this minute this is the best and on earth.

Yeah ... there was a lot wrong in Nam and not just cause the politicians were always dragging your balls down. There was the leadership there. I come close to fragging one little sucker Tell you. Whoops, getting my wars mixed up: That was Korea. But I know about a lot of fragging in Nam. Temporary cures. Hey, we tell the truth to each other but we dot foul the nest. So rgeants again what y paetdrunk but you know what paetdrunk but you ktcr after aftelook t my hand shakinte politicians dotheir dance and thepeople give up , then ther good coe take has given

and do something with it.

It ti

Think about that falls his voice, falls and the black woodsthemselves seem to moan, the deer in pale silver outline

liftingup their heads.

I knew it all once. Hey when yore young and full of hot
shitready

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to explode you know it all. Like this young lieutenant in
Korea. Skipper. de got on my case a lot of times back then.
Twentyyears ago? And for what? Not asking -he basic questions
orhowever it was expressed back then. Like suits change
theirfuckin styles, yo+now? I dot know. Something I was doing
wrongor thinking wrong that al *he young pissers knew, was
bornknowing. oh yeah! Hey! Cat even see you guys now. Well,
just. Knew tcr after aftelook aited long enough. ow what the
helhat approaching? That come up out ofChesapeake Bay or
something? Halti Who fuckin goes there?

Two barely-discernable men with silvery sticks come
towardsthe7n.

aited long enough. ut that. Didt knowthis here was the post
golf course. Just come over here causethey had the enlisted mes
club closed for renovations. Expandingit for the next war.
Pardon me I sing. what makes the grass growso green/ in
Aberdeen? / ChickenshitiAs light breathing is heard one ball
clinks into a cup ...another.

There playing by braille you ask me. I did that plenty but
noton no golf course. ok;iy okay okay dot be some damn picky.
ut that. Didt knowuirt lieutenant but oregonna wish I didt
cause yore gonna find out something you dotwanna know. You guys
is hard, but nobods hard enough.

So iwas Skipper in Korea. Aint that some name for a man?
Butwhat the fuck it was the new amy back then. Aint it
always?Always new everything everywhere. Cat keep fuckin up
with itexcept is always

S.0. S. Same ole shit.hAnyways when yore young yore fuckin
unique and thas al)ffiere isto it. You think yore some kind
ofangel but there take wot do Screw a snakeand say it was for
science. And is a wonder the lads crotchesdot melt out of their
pants with you a hundred yards away.

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managed to find twenty gallons? Then five pairs of
binocularsgot us a couple of cases of oranges from a navy ship

at Pusan. Hey! Since we took our chances on the plague let the swabies flirt around with scurvy. Hemorrhagic fever they called it, from the fleas of rats. I guess we all remember plopping down into foxholes in the middle of drowned and poisoned rats. Just so some gud feel safe in his Cadillac) and a mortar wot belobbed between him and Honey in a bed at the Bluebird Motel. But we protect everybody we just aint sensitive is all. So, old Sergeants, some not so old sergeants celebrated the end of the Korean War with screwdrivers in a fifty five gallon drum with its top: cut off. Everything in excess. Hell if I could drop this bunch of grizzlies back there now we wouldnt miss a beat. Most of my life seems to consist of going back and doing thing I did before, walking up to somebody you havet seen in twenty years and saying something like hey, you was telling me how the old lady tucked you up good. She complete the job yet? But fuck all that cause we was dipping in there with big mess cups, big blue ice bobbing around in all that dusky orange just like this ice beside me now melting down and coolin can feeeeeeeeeelll more fuckin beer. Tough titty. And twenty plus years between two pretty blue hunks of ice and... the same hunk. No years. All of life is fuckin deja vu, soldier life anyways. Well anyways, all you heard back then were sipping noises and sighs and we wanted to go on that way forever in that dark green air of that buttoned up tent where you had to drink cause you couldnt breathe. Once in a while yod hear a dog face yell, but from further away than those deer. They was playing basketball while us sergeants drank ourselves senseless for our country.

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And all the while there you are just firing those basic questions all over the lot. Hundred a minute. unless yore a soldier and is fuck the basic questions or whatever you warma: call them cause if yore a soldier you got the only security. Follow the orders and forget the shit behind them. And if the orders dot make no sense no how, well then we know just how to do nothing, or just how to Step in fetch it till the officers get the right ideas. Thas our science and it aint in any book or on TV neither. You feel your way through this fuckin life. hThas the fuckin art of it. And yet with my wife and boys ... ? Aint it though? A real complicated life. I agree: C is a good grade But I want A in everything and thas why my guts grind I guess.

Well anyways this fuckbrain lieutenant, this Skipper, he really got to me the day the Korean War ended. Twenty seven July nineteen and fifty three if I aint mistaken, gentlemen. I was kinda inside a big booze bore like this, no offense. Is just that wot donot buit to watch fairy captains putt in their bermuda shorts. But let anybody shoot for any hole they want, right?

The golfers leave in their cars, headlights momentarily pickingout shifting pockets of mist. In one the deer nibble leaves; hiavoice and the no&-droning cars as natural sounds to them, luZling.

KK

Anyways they had stopped playing games at Pqwuhi Xk and we got out of that war. In anticipation of which, in anticipation of which I had been working on a chrome-plated forty-five to tradeto Quartermaster for alcohol. Legal as you old ordinance types know for cleaning lenses. I w,,Dapped the requisition around the pretty gun and would you believe they

Then someone pushes a flap aside and you could see these kids up against the absolute fuckin gold of the rice paddies. Knock you eye out and those screwdrivers sliding downi You bank those moments and draw on them for a lifetime. And I dot mean just the drinking but what everything looks like and the stories until the quiet settles in and it gets all ... stretchy ... I dot know, the time I mean. I dot know how to say it but is living at any rate.

So in all that lovely green and orange and blue funk uirt lieutenant but he longest f@ckin 6@t everwhatchacalilit , exhaled by man when in busts this fuckbrainsquirt shavetail lieutenant, this Skipper. Get the troops to the mess hall pulsory lecturell The was over and hnot bui book. Nowl Is a historic first for him. Ilcls gonna rcad the semon tht division and the pentagon sends down in a kit and with all the answers answered for you if anybods stupid enough to DLV

ask. You know, A we had to stop Charlie in Chunchon or held rape every woman and hall he men in the shopping plazas around Atlanta. Well you know the shit that they said, and in Nam too, though they was called on it there. IL

And you kno,- +her book. r a wa, gentlemen. The was the reason.

Two deer approach them, their coat.9 twitching in darkest silver.

C17non elmon, come next to me. Dot be afraid. Come
But it didnt do no good to tell himHey, Lieutenantl Was over.
All bets are offill I was shouting then too, but there was
nodeer to ran away, just sweating GIs and ossified sergeants.
AndI was tedling him what you never should say, that the
dogfacesdot give a shit about the fuckin propaganda. Thed just
as soonhlisten to the other sidr a wae were ll siti-ftg thre,
all ams and legs and stintingbreath and
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soaking fatigues. Armpits and assholesi But he went on
andonwith the stupid lecture till I couldt stand it no more.
HeyLieutenantl These poor dogfaces dot care about Communism.
Andthe gooks dot know what it is neither and they was fighting
forit. We were dogfacs and all we know is we havet been
killed. So why not weall have a fuckin drink. And you come
back to the sergeanstent... ll Communistsi Nazisl Shitt How many
times have Ilistened to the asshole wisdom of officers and
smiled my sergeanssmile like it was nailed to my fuckin mouth?
But the other guys is badl Badi No fuckin doubt. I transported
aGerman prisoner and we got lost for a week crawling
throughbombed out cities looking for women and booze. he
longest f@ckin 6@west, a girl with hr own girl now. H
dogfaceant ofcourse.

He assu%es another voice and -,-,the other two sergeants shift
intheir metal oh42irs.Your opinions are interesting, Sergeant.
Wewill go into them and any other questions in the context of
thequestion and answer period.lhAnd owest, a girl with hg, he
had started wih a shriek and ended in a fuckin wandering whisper
and rightthen I knew I did a bad fuckin thing cause the
sonofabitch wascracking and he was trying to give discipline to
himself, really,to the troopers too, but mostly to hold himself
together.

And then heant ofhis eye ... terrified. Alls you could see was
whitest He evenwoke the troops up,so fuckin crazy was his act.
Next hhis eyeof ther with mechasing. I had my own kids. g, he
had started wiight caose my pridsin killing people, not
hurtingthem. Thad sound weird to anybody else but I can say it
to youguys. Is one of the things I gotta say.And you two know
now what I knew back then, that ight caose my pridsinside out to

make i right, that if I had any idea he was

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so shaky inside out to make ie stupid lecture for hours and not tucked around at all. Is one of the things that's burned the shit out of my life.

Are there others? I wondered when you would start pulling my leg.

Anyway, I had dismissed the dogfaces before I started to run after the crazy lieutenant and I could hear them buzzing back there while the stupid lecture forced him leading me @ab into a little canyon

back of our company area and right then see him leading me @abings had

cause I'd used (ut a lot of shit I didn't feel like inventorying-little replacement lenses and shit like that. And now these lenses and here fuckin begins the party you won't believe of them underground bushes and weeds, blue glowing. Hing underground and screaming to high heaven about nothing, but all the starch just goes out of my legs and I just fuckin sink down there where things had

cause I'd used -I don't know for good, like before a thunderstorm.

And now I don't know for good Sonlll And he turns around with those fuckin white cr yeyes and all of a sudden fuffffffl Hg and white blotches of fire, a string. He drops like a rock and these blotches skitter off him and roll around the whole fuckin place and rolling over those lenses and making them like blue water, melting them and the aluminum casings too. And fuck Smoke is rising from Skipperl Sonlll I scream the fuckin loudest I can scream and these medics are rushing by me and where the fuck did they come from? And then this one-star slitty-eye general plants himself in front of me. Sonlll And he turns to sit The lieutenantlll

A streetlight goes on and shapes come and go in the mist looking like old men and breathing children. The lieutenant can't be all right. Fine. No sweat. Arld ... nothing happened, you got that? You've been around long enough to know what I mean.

Everything'll be fine.11

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I knew that they had tucked up their little exercise, that they thought they were miles from any GIs. With their fuckin shooting-around blotches of white fire. It was horrible ... and that's why I stay here. The lieutenants never happened. Like a lot of things that happened and it is nice to know they did it right? That's what they call History.

But P6 didn't happen and Skipper doesn't check into a veterans hospital every day or so for tests. White blood, by now. And I get about five strep throats a year but I don't.

Didn't some Hitler doctor pour concrete into bunkers? Education'll save the world. Ain't it a strange love though?

Soon the three men will sleep, their heads on the table; the deer will be gone. Skipper! he will snore in his sleep and the other two will mumble. And then I'll, by the way, oh little Mickey. Let me go down in the water with you. I love you.